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THE EXTENT OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRIZE.

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THE EXTENT OF THE MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE.

[By the Rev. Gardiner Spring, D. D., New York.]

"*The field is the World.*"—MATT. xiii, 38.

THE text represents this world as the field, where every thing is in progress for a great moral ingathering; and from the labors of which, neither God, angels, nor men will rest, until that eventful consummation, when he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come. We occupy here and there an enclosure in this vast territory—a kingdom or nation—a few spots reclaimed from barrenness, and clothed with beauty; while the wide field is for the most part grown over with thorns. And yet it is not one portion of the earth alone toward which the efforts and prayers of the friends of God and man are to be directed; it is to *the world.* I repeat it, it is to the *world.* This is the field, and nothing short of this. The field is the world.

I. As it regards *its wants.*

Man's apostacy is universal. Every thing in Nature, Providence, and the Bible, proclaims that the whole world is in a state of alienation from God. Should an inhabitant of some sinless planet visit this earth, he would behold a most tragic spectacle. With the exception of a few irradiated spots, he would see this fair creation, with all its busy inhabitants, without a beam of light to cheer their despondency or dissipate their fear; without a ray of hope to gild their passage to the dark and narrow house; without a star to twinkle on the gloom that stretches itself along the horizon of their eternity.

It is a solemn and affecting truth, that "where no vision is, the people perish." If the Gospel of Christ is the only means by which men are turned from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God, then without this Gospel are they without God and holiness, without heaven and hope. The history of the world shows nothing more plainly, than that all other means of moral purity are ineffectual, and that where the Gospel is hid, it is "hid to them that are lost." There is, and ever has been, a wonderful uniformity in the character of the pagan world. What Paul said of them eighteen hundred years ago, has been true every where, and at all times, and is true still. They are "given over to a reprobate mind;" abandoned to the most stupid idolatry, to the foulest impieties, and to every species of debasing and degrading wickedness; to vile affections, and unnatural lusts; to cruel malice, and rapacious wrong; to luxury, treachery, licentiousness, and blood. Such is their character, whether roaming over barren deserts, or dwelling in fertile plains; whether inhabiting the lonely waste, or crowded city; whether amid the snows of Greenland, or the burning suns of Ethiopia. Go where you will, from the most savage to the most civilized state

of man, and you find the same indications of sin and woe. Wherever the apostles travelled, whether into Athens or Rome, Corinth or Ephesus, Europe, Asia, or Africa; wherever the recesses of the human mind were explored, and the heart of man made bare, were the same marks of disorder and ruin. And wherever modern missionaries have directed their course, they have found the ravages of sin the same. Such was the character of our heathen ancestors; and such would be our character now, but for the Gospel. Remove these candlesticks out of their places; quench the light of truth; and Britain and the United States would not differ from the heathen of Bombay, or the Indian Islands. Nor are these moral ravages essentially more destructive in one place than another. The *whole earth* groans under the sin of man, and feels the explosion of his apostacy to its remotest bounds. Most emphatically, in this respect, the field is the world. It is so,

II. As it regards *the provisions of the Divine mercy.*

The world by wisdom knew not God. Eye hath not seen it, nor ear heard it, nor hath it entered into the heart of man. The depth saith, It is not in me; the sea saith, It is not with me. It cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof. Nor is it by the deeds of law that a creature fallen by his iniquity can be justified before God. And yet is there a method of deliverance which, though not contemplated by the law, and in itself utterly above and beyond the claims of a legal dispensation, so honors and satisfies the law, that the Lawgiver can be just, and the dispenser of pardons. This method is the christian atonement—the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God—the vicarious righteousness of the Word Incarnate. It is the salvation of the cross; it is redemption through the blood of Jesus; it is forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his

grace. While, by this expedient the blessings of the new covenant are secured to all who were given to the Savior as the reward of his sufferings and death, yet is there a fulness and all-sufficiency in the very nature of this redemption, which vindicates the offers of mercy to every creature. The scenes of Calvary affected every part of the world, and every age of time. They gave birth to measures in the Divine administration before unknown. They gave a new aspect to the Divine government toward the universe, and especially toward this fallen world. They surmounted the obstacles which obstructed the exercise of the Divine mercy, placed the whole family of man in new relations, and brought every son and daughter of Adam within the reach of repentance and pardon. Hence, wherever this Gospel comes, it makes a free and unembarrassed offer of life eternal to all mankind, without distinction, and without exception. It makes it upon the lowest and most reasonable terms, and with the affecting and solemn protestation, that the Father of mercies has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but rather that he would turn and live.

The sufficiency and fulness of the Divine mercy, therefore, run parallel with the apostacy of men. They are co-extensive with the wants of a world that lieth in wickedness; they are every way adequate to the depth and extent of man's apostacy, and stand abreast with the ravages of sin. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Such was the bounty of the Father's love. "God so loved the *world*, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." And when the Son hung upon the cross, it was not that he might

be the propitiation for Gentile or Jew, but for the sins of *the whole world.* No matter where the transgressor is found, or in what age he has lived, or to what customs he may be in bondage; Jesus Christ saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by him. No matter by what caste he may be enchained, or what idol he adores, or what planet he worships, or in what enchanted waters he bathes, or how deep the stain of his impurity; the blood of the Lamb can make him white as snow. No matter how many his fears, or how heavy his burden of iniquity, or how fearful his prospects; the meek and lowly Savior can refresh him when he is weary and heavy laden, comfort him when he is disconsolate, give him rest from the burden of his guilt, and in the last conflict crown him with victory. No matter who he is, nor whence he comes; so long as he belongs to the world for which the Savior died, he may have life and heaven if he will repent and believe the Gospel. No: no matter who, no matter how many press into the kingdom—let them come in from the continents and the islands, from the hills and the valleys, from the thronged metropolis or the retired hamlet—let them come from the high lands of Thibet, or the plains of the Ganges, from Norway or the southern capes;—there is a boundless sufficiency in the provisions of the Gospel. But this observation receives additional force when we consider,

III. That the Gospel is alike *adapted to every portion of this fallen world.*

Whatever adaptation to the peculiar character and condition of men the Gospel possesses, it is universal. What it can do for one man, it can do for another; and what it can accomplish for one part of the world, it can accomplish for another. It has nothing that is local, and that is suited only to a particular clime, or district, or form of government. It has nothing that is temporary,

and limited to any particular age of the world. It has nothing that respects the persons of men, but consults the conditions of the poor as well as the rich, and the rich as well as the poor. It has nothing in its nature that is exclusive, and that necessarily shuts out any part of the human family. It consults all conditions, and all orders of intellect. It speaks to the whole, and to each individual part, with the same explicitness, authority, and adaptation.

The philosophy of the schools, the paganism of Greece and Rome, the dogmas of the Koran and the Shaster, the multiplied systems of modern paganism, could none of them become the universal religion. The Gospel alone is "adapted to man as he is, all over the world." It is adapted to the human *intellect.* It sets before men the most interesting objects of thought—objects which, when seen and felt, never fail to arrest and elevate the mind. It satisfies the mind by its truth, and does not abandon it to doubt and conjecture. A religion that is untrue can never be of extensive and universal application; because the human intellect sooner or later revolts at it. False religions are dreams, and must vanish away. They give no repose from uncertainty and fluctuation, no direction to the wandering mind, nothing for the expanded and enlightened intellect to rest on. Nor is the Gospel less adapted to the *conscience,* than the intellect. Penances and prayers, fastings and self-torture, ablutions and sacrifices, the blood of bulls and of goats, and the sprinkling of the ashes of an heifer, cannot take away sin. The wretched pagan, who gives her first-born for her transgression, and the fruit of her body for the sin of her soul, after all, finds her conscience unrelieved of its burden. But it is a fact in the history of man worthy to be remembered, that the soul that feels the burden of its transgressions, that trembles with appre-

hension at the coming wrath, that is stung ever so mortally with the guilt of sin, may always find healing and peace in the blood of the cross. No matter how severe the scrutiny with which the foundation of her hopes is inspected; no matter how many and great her sins and apprehensions may have been, here she finds rest. Nor, where it is loved, is the Gospel less adapted to the *heart* than to the intellect and conscience. It is to the heart that it makes its most powerful appeals. That moral advancement and purity which are so indispensable to the present and eternal well-being of men, find no culture, no aliment, save in the Gospel. Nor is it to be overlooked, that the Gospel, though it has not a magic, has a transforming power. It possesses resources in which it differs even from the pretensions of all other religions. It reveals an agency, an insinuating, controlling, omnipotent influence, by which its truths and motives are accompanied with a resistless energy. It is the *power of God* and the *wisdom of God* unto salvation. It can form the soul anew. There is not a human being so abject and degraded that it cannot elevate; not a mind so benighted that it cannot illumine; not a tribe of all the families of men that it cannot reclaim, sanctify, and save. And equally adapted is it to man's *immortal* nature. Life and immortality, elsewhere conjectured, or at best hoped for, are here brought to *light*, and with a plenitude and clearness that consults the deepest exigencies of perishing men.

Such is the universal adaptation of the gospel to the character and condition of man. Unlike the instructions of pagan philosophy, and the mysteries of pagan worship, its doctrines are intelligible and true, its rites few and simple, its duties authoritative and sacred; its promises, its threatenings, its worship, its rewards, suited to every variety and condition of human kind. Name, sect, sta-

tion, character, country, are all alike open to its visits of mercy, and alike fitted to profit by its influence. It has sympathies for the Cossacks of the Don and the Volga, and for the polished inhabitants of the British Islands; for the purple of the palace, and the nakedness of the desert; for the Greek and the Jew, the barbarian and the Scythian, the bond and the free. It reveals facts and principles, and offers of mercy, and a Redeeming Savior, every where adapting themselves to the genius of human society, and the fittest instrument to be employed in the conversion of men. And when you speak of them, they shall lose none of their importance, or power, from any peculiarity in the condition and character of those to whom they are addressed. Just as the earth, the air, the seasons, and the light are adapted to man, so is the Gospel. "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater," so is the Gospel.

IV. The field is the world, if we regard *the command of the Savior, in relation to the extent of territory to be cultivated.*

It were a safe conclusion from the facts already adverted to, that men are bound to the most unlimited dissemination of the word of life. All are the offspring of the same great and almighty parent; all are born for immortality; all must appear at the final judgment; all are destined either to a world of joy or woe; all are apostate and lost; in the provisions of the Divine mercy there is sufficiency for all; and it were the dictate of reason and benevolence to give all the Gospel. But the Savior has not left us to our own deductions, even on a point so plain. By a precept which cannot well be misinterpreted, or misunderstood, uttered by his own lips, and under circumstances of memorable interest, he has solemnly direct-

ed his church to inculcate the truths, and enforce the duties of his Gospel on men far off and near, known and unknown, men of every nation and clime, whether friends or foes, and whatever may be their language, their intellectual culture, their rank, color, or religion. It was his last command. He had descended from heaven to earth, to establish the only religion that proclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth and good will to men;" he had already made himself an offering and a sacrifice unto God; he had poured out his sorrows and blood on the cross; the print of the nails was in his hands and in his feet, and in his side he still bore the mark of the spear; he had risen from the dead, and given public demonstrations of his conquests over death and hell; he had laid aside the wreath of thorns, and been invested with the crown of the mediatorial kingdom; he was just about to assert his claims, sway his sceptre, and commence the conquests of his truth and love in this revolted world—nay, the opening heavens were in his eye—he was just about entering upon the glory he had with the Father before the world was: and he came and said to his disciples—*What did he say?* "ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH: GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE."

What injunction could have been more affecting, more easily remembered, more obligatory? And is not the field the world? Whom does this commission exclude? What untutored tribe? What clime? What government? What land of friends or enemies? What remote and barbarous people? What living man? And what interpretation did the early Christians give to this injunction? "They went *every where* preaching the word:" to Phenicia, to Antioch, to Syria, and to the provinces of Asia Minor; to Macedonia, Greece, and Italy; to the Islands of the Mediterranean, to Scythia, and Persia; to

Spain, Gaul, and Germany; to Arabia, Armenia, Ethiopia, and China. With diligence, with suffering, with strong crying, and many tears, night and day, they toiled and labored, at home and abroad, on the land and on the sea, in necessities and distresses, in stripes and imprisonments, in watchings and fastings, that they might bear the messages of the Savior's love to every land. And who will charge them with enthusiasm? Why should these glad tidings be proclaimed only to a favored few? Could our blessed Master more definitely have individualized the race, than he has done in this commission? Preach to *every creature!* O it is marvellous that through the apathy and unfaithfulness of his own followers, the heavenly message has been "arrested at the shores of christian lands," and the angel impeded in his flight, that would long ago have borne it across every ocean and every shore.

V. The field is the world, if we regard *the predicted and ultimate triumphs of the Redeemer.*

Had it been revealed that any part of the earth were perpetually abandoned of God, though the *duty* might not have been called in question, we might, perhaps, have questioned the *expediency* of extending our efforts to such a proscribed and reprobate territory. But, when the first promise was published in Paradise, the point was settled, that the assaulted Redeemer should extend his kingdom over the inhabited world. And when the Savior gave the command that his Gospel should be published to every creature, he did it in view of its ultimate and universal triumphs.

There were indeed centuries of darkness to pass away, before this glorious consummation. His church, in her origin, was a little flock, though ultimately to possess the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven. When first planted on the banks of the

Jordan, she was like the handful of corn on the top of the mountains, destined to shake like Lebanon; or like the grain of mustard seed, one day to overshadow the nations. Nothing is more certainly determined in the Bible, than that the heathen are given to the Son of God for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession; that he must reign, until all enemies are put under his feet; and that the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. The Prince and Savior has done and suffered what no other being in the Universe has done and suffered; and he shall have his reward; he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied. And hence, Prophet after Prophet foretels his conquests. At one time they say, "From the rising of the sun, unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles." At another they affirm, that "in every place, incense shall be offered to his name, and a pure offering." At one time they say, "The Lord of hosts will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." At another they affirm, that "the Lord shall make bare his arm in the sight of all people;" at another, that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;" and at another, anticipating the consummations of his reign, they announce, "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!" Tell me not of difficulty in the accomplishment of these purposes, for, "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them." Say not that the world opposes itself to these designs of mercy, for "as I live, saith the Lord, all the earth shall be filled with my glory!" Speak not of principalities and powers who resist the progress of his kingdom, for "he shall speak to them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure: he

shall rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel." Complain not of the want of instruments or agencies to advance the design, for he has all secondary causes in his hand, and he will urge forward his purposes of love with the least possible delay.

Why then should *we* take a more limited survey of the field than is taken by the Divine purpose? Why not include within our efforts all that is included within his? If his purposes are circumscribed by nothing but the *world*, why should our plans be so narrow as to retard and embarrass his career? If nothing else will satisfy the extent and largeness of *his* desires, nothing short of this may satisfy *ours*. Why, when he is going forth conquering and to conquer, and with the avowed purpose of subjugating the *world*, why should not his church prepare the way for his most extended and universal triumphs? It is not more certain that all the nations shall call the Savior blessed, and be blessed in him, than that all shall become acquainted with his Gospel. It is not more certain that thousands and millions, in all lands, shall be translated from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son, than that all lands are the appropriate sphere of christian exertion. Since there is no portion of this fallen race where the God of love will not shed abroad the serenity of his grace, then is there none to which the ministry of reconciliation must not be commissioned with the overtures of pardon and peace: none on which the light of Sabbaths must not shine in all softness and splendor; none on which the supplications of the saints do not draw such copious and continuous showers of mercy, that the wilderness shall become like Eden, and the desert like the garden of the Lord. It is one of the darkest mysteries in the administration of the Divine government, that this world has been permitted to remain so long in a state of alienation

from God. But who may affirm that it had not been otherwise, had the church been faithful in the dissemination of his Gospel?

I add:—

VI. The field is the world, if we regard *the existing intimations of Divine Providence.*

There have been seasons when unyielding difficulties have stood in the way of every thing like combined and well organized effort for the conversion of the world; and when, from the paucity of numbers in the church—from the want of means—from various circumstances in the existing state of human society—from hostile relations of different parts of the earth—from intrinsic difficulties in international intercourse—from the domination of anti-christian governments—and from the internal agitations of heathen lands, it would have been impossible to have disseminated the Gospel beyond very circumscribed limits. More than once, the church has had enough to do to save her single self from being swept away by the torrent. Such was her condition during several periods of the patriarchal age. Such was her condition after the confusion of tongues. Such was her condition at the calling of Abraham. And long after this period, a dark and heavy cloud overshadowed the earth. The Sun of Righteousness was withdrawn, and save the single nation of the Jews, was withdrawn for more than six thousand years. During the most of this period, there was no encouragement for missionary effort. There were no intimations in the providence of God, that the time had come for the extended and universal dissemination of his truth. So forbidding were the indications, even in the days of the apostles, that those holy men did not venture to labor among the heathen until they were expressly and divinely directed so to do. For several of the earlier centuries of the christian era, the pagan world was

indeed more accessible, and every part of it was by turns open to missionary effort, and successively visited by the heralds of the cross. But this little illumined zone of time grew narrower and narrower, and the light gradually waned, and became more and more dim, till it almost vanished away. During the middle and dark ages, ignorance and superstition overspread the earth; the fairest portions of it were desolated and overthrown; the church herself was fleeing before an implacable enemy; and every thing precluded generous and benevolent effort. Never was the human mind subjected to a heavier bondage; never did a longer or more afflictive night pass over the earth; never did every thing concur to throw a deeper shade over the prospects of the heathen.

But these days have gone by. Since the revival of letters in the sixteenth century, and especially since the great Reformation, there has been a gradual expansion of the human mind in all the departments of knowledge. Men have been preparing to appreciate every advance in intelligence, liberty, and religion; and to co-operate in designs for the purpose of superseding the dominion of vice, anarchy, idolatry, hypocrisy, and superstition, by the simplicity and power of the Gospel. Since the invention of the art of printing, the deep foundations of human ignorance have been broken up, and the knowledge of God and his salvation has found a channel through which they may be poured upon the world like a flood. Since the discovery of the mariner's compass, also, there is no shore so distant, but is sought with eagerness; no ocean so vast, but is traversed with safety. Remote continents and distant islands are brought within our reach. There is no excuse for not carrying the Gospel to New Zealand, or the islands of the Pacific, as well as to other immense territories which may now be explored with less preparation and alarm, than the ancients "would cross the

Euxinê, or a small arm of the Mediterranean." In every view, the aspect of the world is changed. The present state of the sciences universally—the discoveries in astronomy and geography—in natural philosophy and chemistry—the wonderful power of steam in its application to the mechanical arts, and the means of intercourse —all these lay open to the world, to the eye, and heart, and hand, of the Christians. The despotic sceptre of human governments, also, is melting away; the influence of a corrupt and wicked priesthood begins to be suspected; the Islam power is on the wane, and large portions of the pagan world are already under the influence of christian governments and wholesome laws. And never was there a time when the heathen world itself was so prepared to receive the Gospel as it is now. The pagan intellect is waking up. The Indian tribes, the islands of the sea, Africa, Burmah, the hither and farther Indies, and even China, weary of their philosophy, and half disgusted with their idols, are stretching forth their hands unto God. Every where the church is breaking forth on the right hand and on the left. The blood of her martyrs has begun to flow. There is a magnificence in her plans, a concurrence in her operations, a promptness, a bounty, a zeal, an invention in her benevolence, which have never been before witnessed. Missionary stations are to be found in almost all parts of the earth. And when you take the map of the world, you will see that they have been so selected as to afford a ready intercourse with one another, and with pagan, Mahometan, and anti-christian countries. There is a line of stations in different latitudes, making circles of light round the globe. The sacred fire is thus enkindled, and at such distances, that it is not difficult to see that it must spread, till it burns over this vast desert, and prepares it for the harvest. It deserves to be noticed with gratitude, also, that through the noble

efforts of the different Bible Societies, and especially of the British and Foreign Society, the languages of the earth are in the progress of rapid attainment by christian missionaries; and this formidable obstacle to the world's conversion is so far surmounted, that in nearly two hundred different languages, men may now read in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Add to this that there are schools and higher seminaries of learning established by Christians in pagan and anti-christian lands, where thousands upon thousands of youth and children are instructed in the truths of the Gospel. Never had the church so fair an opportunity of making an impression on the minds of this apostate world as she has now. There is, in a word, at this moment, a more extended and a more varied series of causes for the conversion of men and a more rapid succession of means and ends for this grand result, than has ever distinguished any preceding age, not excepting that of the apostles. And if these efforts are continued and advance, in humble dependence on God, we cannot suppress the hope, that in a few generations more, perhaps when another generation shall have passed away, the strong holds of paganism will be broken down.

Surely the field is the world. Every thing unites in saying, *The field is the world.* Men, means, effort, expectation, all proclaim, *The field is the world.* It is the voice of providence; it is the voice of prophecy; it is the voice of ruined millions, borne on the winds from every sea and land; it is the voice of Calvary; it is the voice of God. Yes, the field is the world. The dwellers on the rocks and on the mountains reiterate the cry, The field is the world. Hundreds of Zion's choicest sons, her talent, her learning, her eloquence, burning with zeal to live and die for the heathen, all proclaim, *The field is the world!* These scenes of mercy, this house of God, these

days of glad recital and fond remembrance, the design of our present meeting, these hopes and supplications, these tokens of hallowed fellowship in widely separated churches, every thing we see, and hear, and feel, has a tongue to proclaim, THE FIELD IS THE WORLD.

In suggesting a few of the thoughts inculcated by the preceding illustrations, we cannot but observe,

1. The *obvious inequality in the distribution of the means of grace and salvation.* When our Lord proclaimed, "The field is the world," he did not mean that all the seed of the kingdom should be collected into a single furrow, or all the labor of his servants devoted to any one inclosure. When he told his followers that they were the light of the world, and the salt of the earth, he instructed them that their influence ought to be widely diffused. So when he gave the command to his church, to disciple all nations, to preach the Gospel to every creature, it was not that they might confine their instructions to a few favored spots, and leave the rest of the world a moral desert: nor was it, that any one portion of the earth should in this respect be distinguished above another, except so far as the most effectual distribution of the Gospel throughout the world might require, and his providence lead the way.

And who does not see that this is the only way in which the world can ever be converted to God? If a man wishes to burn over an extensive forest, he lights up, not a single fire, but a hundred or a thousand fires, in different places, and at different distances. So if we ever expect to send the Gospel to the world, there must be something like an equal distribution of the means of grace and salvation. This is the way in which the Gospel was first published. It is obvious, at a glance, that the apostles directed all their movements upon this principle. Nor was it an uncommon thing, when they lost sight of

this, and began too eagerly to concentrate their forces, for their Great Head and Master to commission the wrath of their enemies to scatter them among the nations.

Take a glance at the unevangelized portions of our globe. Look at Russia, extending from the Baltic to the Pacific, and containing a population of fifty-seven millions; and for this vast territory there are only six christian missionaries. Look at China, containing a population of three hundred millions; and for all this immense empire there are not more than seven or eight Protestant preachers. Look at the countries lying on the Indian Ocean, and you see Siam with a population of two millions, and Burmah with eleven millions, and with only eighteen preachers of the Gospel. Look at Hindostan, where there is a population of one hundred and twenty millions, and where there are more missionaries than in any one pagan country, and even there, there is not one christian teacher to a million of people. Look at Persia, where there are eleven millions of inhabitants, and at Arabia, where there are twelve millions, and where, in neither country, until within a short period, has there been a single missionary. Look at the thirty millions scattered throughout the Asiatic islands, most of them pagans and Mahometans, with a supply of only sixty missionaries. Look at Africa, containing probably one hundred and ten millions of souls, and throughout all its coasts, including the English settlement of the Cape of Good Hope, and the districts of Sierra Leone and Siberia, there are less than a hundred christian teachers. In the Eastern hemisphere alone, the population of unevangelized countries is at least six hundred millions, while the number of missionaries is not far from four hundred!

Now look at Christendom. The United States of America contain fifteen millions of inhabitants, and have more than eleven thousand ministers of the Gospel, and

in addition to these, three thousand young men in training for the sacred ministry. England has a population of fourteen millions, and has not far from twenty-four thousand ministers of the Gospel. Scotland has a population of two and a half millions, and about two thousand ministers of the Gospel. Were the means of religious instruction in the American States equally distributed, the country would be amply supplied. But it is no uncommon thing for us to see a city, containing thirty thousand inhabitants, supplied by thirty ministers of the Gospel; and still more common, to see a village that contains but twenty-five hundred inhabitants, to have five or six settled ministers. And the same is true of Britain, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, only upon a more extensive scale, and more obvious inequality of distribution. The United States has one minister of the Gospel for every fourteen hundred souls; England has one for every six hundred; Scotland has one for every twelve hundred; and the poor heathen have one to a million and a half!

And is it so that the field is the world? Then must there be sin somewhere in relation to this matter. My brethren, will not the Last Great Day show that our skirts are not all pure from the blood of the heathen? I am not for emptying Christendom of its ministers; but I am for distributing this immense disparity of her supplies. What should give a few favored lands a pre-eminence in this respect só much above all others? *Must* we despair of devising some method by which the conflicting interests of sect and denomination may be so adjusted, that this evil may at least be in some measure removed, and the number of missionaries to the heathen augmented a hundred fold? England, if all her ministers are true men, has at this moment five or six thousand to spare for the heathen. The United States could spare fifteen hundred; and Scotland a thousand. Ten thousand ministers might,

during the present year, be drawn off from Christendom, and given to the heathen. What a donation to a dying world! What a present to its redeeming God and King! Oh Christians! what miserable economy is this, of mind, and heart, and moral power, that a single man, who, if he were on heathen ground, might preach the Gospel every Sabbath to thousands, should remain in Britain or the United States, and exhaust his life, and wear out his days, in preaching to some two or three hundred; and who, if they were deprived of his labors, would be well supplied elsewhere! Where is our warrant, when the Master bids us evangelize the world, thus to confine our efforts? The world can never be converted at the heavy and slow rate at which the work is now going on. Centuries of darkness must roll over the earth, unless something is done to secure a more equal dissemination of the Gospel. Oh that the day would dawn, when all who love the Lord Jesus shall be of the same mind and judgment —when party animosities and sectional jealousies shall die away—when apprehension and distrust at home shall no longer diminish the number of laborers abroad— and when churches of every name shall consecrate their best services and their first men to the great end of converting the world.

2. If the field is the world, then does it become every minister of the Gospel *to institute the inquiry, To what portion of this extensive field Jesus Christ requires him to repair?* From motives of mere preference or self-gratification, no man may select his own sphere of labor. It becomes him, when he receives his commission, to investigate its import. What is it? How does it read? "Go, preach the Gospel to every creature; go, teach all nations: and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world!" Do you acknowledge the prerogative of your Prince in this matter? Do you recognize on this

commission the image and superscription of your Divine Leader? Then, to what part of the world does it send you? Where does it require you to unfold and plant the banner of the Great Captain of our salvation? Is it in the territories of light and life, or in the region and shadow of death? Is it at home, or abroad? Inclination leads a man to stay at home. Friends and family, name and worldly comfort, lead him to stay at home. Sickly climes, savage men, and the blood of martyred missionaries say, *stay at home.* But his commission, the only commission by which he is warranted to preach the Gospel any where, runs in this solemn form:—"Go, preach to every creature!" What shall he do? My brethren, if the fear of God and the love of Jesus Christ are the paramount principles of his conduct; if love to the souls of men bears sway over all earthly loves; if he counts not his life dear to him, so that he may finish his course with joy; in coming to a result in this important concern, the questions he will ask are few, simple, and decisive. And they will be such as these:—For what part of this vast field am I, or can I be best qualified? In what part of it are my labors most needed? Where is the most important sphere of action? And where can I accomplish most for the Savior who died for me? He may not shrink from difficulty, nor be afraid of toil, nor tremble at the wrath of kings, nor the malice of the people. Nay, rather let him aim at the martyr's crown, than basely shrink from the service to which his more than martyred Savior calls him.

We scarcely know how to account for it that so few of that sacramental host, who have professed before God, angels, and men, an unreserved submission to their duty, and who glory in being the disciples of the self-denying and crucified Savior, should, for seventeen centuries past, have consented to devote themselves to the most exten-

sive promulgation of the Gospel. When, O when shall the time come, that young men, baptized with the spirit of their ascending Lord, shall press in crowds to heathen lands? When shall the time come, that it will no longer be thought the dream of chivalry and romance to talk of the conversion of the world? I am persuaded that the day of mercy has dawned upon the heathen. The time is just at hand, when it will be deemed no marvellous act of self-denial to forsake all and follow Christ—when not young men only will flock to pagan lands—but when men of fortune, men of talent, men of family, will deem it their highest honor, their greatest joy, to live and die and fill up the measure of the sufferings of Christ, for this perishing world. Oh what are a few years of labor and fatigue, a few short years of suffering and sorrow, of faithful and painful devotement, for an object so immeasurably important! Are there none among those who hear me, whose duty it may be to live and die among the heathen? Are there none within these walls to whom the Savior is saying, "Chosen disciple, lovest thou me?" Then "*feed my sheep.*" Get thee far hence among the heathen. Go, "feed my lambs." Yes, go. By the sorrows I bore for you on the cross, and by the love I bear you still, go feed my lambs! They are wandering upon the mountains in a gloomy and dark day. And though they are not of this fold, them also must I bring, that there may be one fold and one shepherd.

3. This subject presents in its true and proper light, *the great object of christian missions.* It is nothing less than the conversion of the world. This is the grand object which now demands the united and vigorous effort of the people of God on the earth; and that they may promote this object, is the reason why they occupy a place on this earth, rather than in the mansions of their Father's house.

We live, my brethren, for the conversion of the world. What an object! The glory of our God, the extension and adornment of his church, the welfare of our fellow men—nay, all those objects which make their appeal to the most enlarged and disinterested love of the christian mind are embodied here. This is the object the church needs, to foster her graces, to sustain her activity, to annihilate her divisions, to give harmony and effect to her councils, and to fit her for heaven.

And this is truly a great work. It is a growing, permanent enterprize, and one for which good men must lay their account to labor, and give, and pray, till they go to their final rest. It is one for which they must make up their minds to act more upon principle than upon sudden impulses, and to advance on their beginnings until the work is accomplished. It is not enough to contemplate the conversion of a province, or island, or empire; Zion must enlarge the place of her tent; she must stretch forth the curtains of her habitation, and set herself in earnest to the work of sending the Gospel to every creature. It is not enough that she penetrate territories where she is protected by the arm of power, and cheered by the light of civilization; she must make invasions upon hostile lands, scale the walls of her most infuriated enemies, and, with the courage of other days, select as the most honored and envied fields of labor, the scenes of suffering and the posts of danger. It is not enough that she visit salubrious climes and a balmy atmosphere; she must go forth under burning suns, traverse arid deserts, inhale pestilential vapors, and plant her standard alike under the shadow of the Upas, and amid the exhalations of the Nile. It is not enough that a few isolated individuals, or favored departments of the church of God, wake up to this mighty undertaking; a missionary spirit must be fostered throughout all her borders, and the ardor

and strength of her concentrated piety lay themselves out to send the Gospel to the world.

It is the cry of universal distress that falls upon our ear. It is the *world*, the *world*, that is famishing, while there is bread enough and to spare. *We* have the Gospel. But a few centuries ago; and our ancestors were pagan, and worshipped gods of wood and stone. Now we are the children of the kingdom. And yet, we inhabit a world where there are more than six hundred millions of immortal beings living and dying without God and without hope. What demands upon our compassion and tenderness, our munificence and prayers! Eighteen hundred years have passed away since the blood of propitiation was shed, and yet three fourths of the world in which we dwell have never seen a Bible, or heard of the name of Jesus. *O that our head were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears!* Why, why do we thus ignobly slumber in the work? O for that abhorrence of human impiety which moved the heart of Paul! O for that compassion for the souls of men, and that zeal for the honor of God, which gave self-denial and firmness to men who counted it all joy to labor and suffer for a dying world! O for the love of Swartz and of Brainerd toward the perishing heathen! O for the day when the heart of Christendom shall be moved with pity to the heathen, as the trees of the forest are moved by a mighty wind; when the hallowed influence of the Gospel shall be diffused through every land; when the wilderness shall blossom as the rose, and the songs of salvation shall every where ascend to God and the Lamb.